

14 Vital Skills for Supervisors

Communicating Effectively with Upper Management



11



Communicating Effectively with Upper Management

Relating to Upper Management

Skill
11

- Relate to top management on their terms
- Focus on solutions to problems they face
- One critical skill: analyzing issues from *their* perspective, *not* yours
- Use empathy to deepen your understanding of the bosses' outlook
- Step into their shoes

Care About
Most?
Measures?

Pressures?

Success?



Preparing to Communicate

Skill
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- Before you propose ideas, you must anticipate their questions, concerns and objections – and know what to say to address them
 - Collect data, analyze trends and conduct risk-reward analyses with clarity and precision
 - Avoid bringing only your idea and your excitement about it to the meeting



If a Proposal is Rejected

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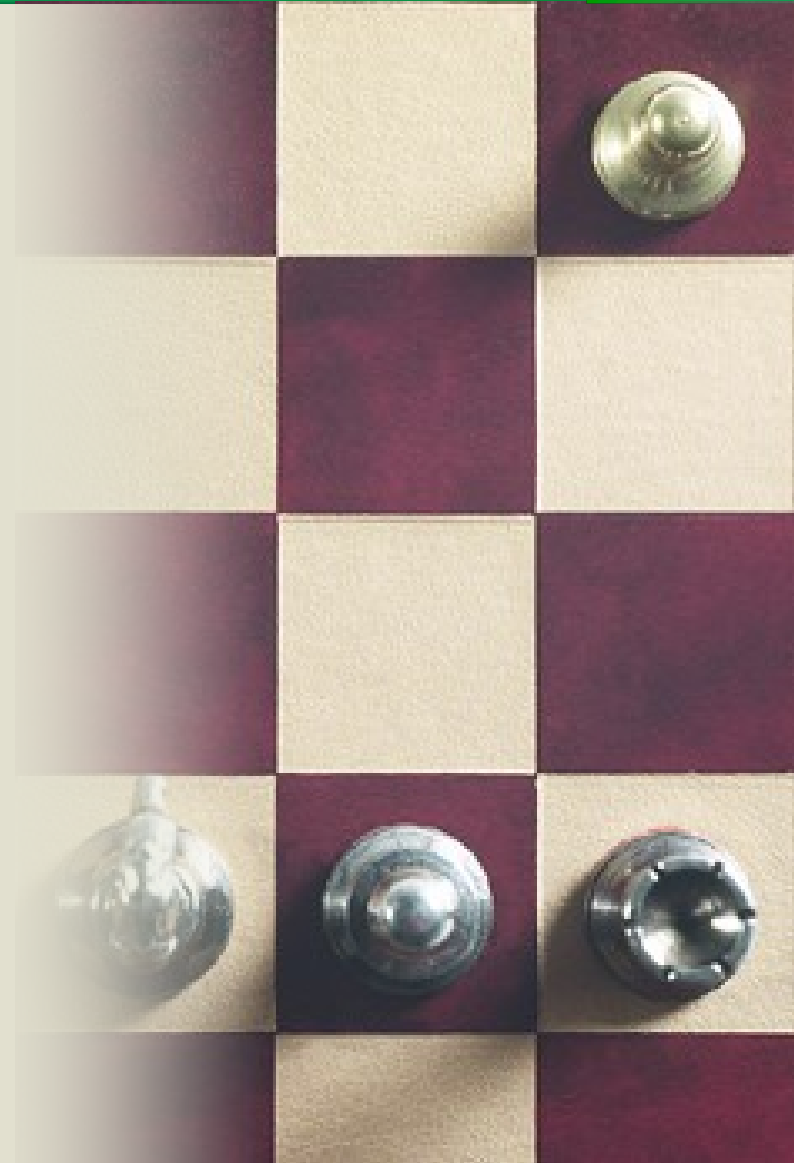
- Treat it as a challenge rather than a defeat
- Don't take it personally or insist repeatedly that you're right
 - Instead, ask fact-finding questions
 - Dig for more information
 - Identify missing pieces
 - Check that you're aware of the key factors driving their thinking



Discussing Strategy


Skill
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- Strike a low-key, analytical tone
- Adopt a “just the facts” style and don’t make assertions without proof



If You're Upset with the Boss

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- Voice your concern in positive, non-accusatory language
- Remind your bosses of the benefits of your idea
- Or, you may find that  by reviewing the stages of a project up to this point, others may conclude that it's best to follow through



Ending the Conversation


Skill
11

- Confirm agreements and take notes
- If you've decided to put an aide on probation, review the notes then ask, "Does that cover it?"
- Have your pen and notepad ready if the boss modifies the plan



Saying Thank-You

Skill
11

- Look for opportunities to thank upper management
- If you get advice that you found helpful, say so...
- If you took a day off  for a family emergency, express gratitude...
- This shows that you appreciate their kindness and admire their leadership



Dealing with Their Mistakes

Skill
11

- Resist saying “I told you so”
- If you believe you’re smarter than they are, keep it to yourself!
- While it’s fine to try to correct a boss’ mistakes once or even twice, let it go if the problem persists 🔊



Warning

Skill
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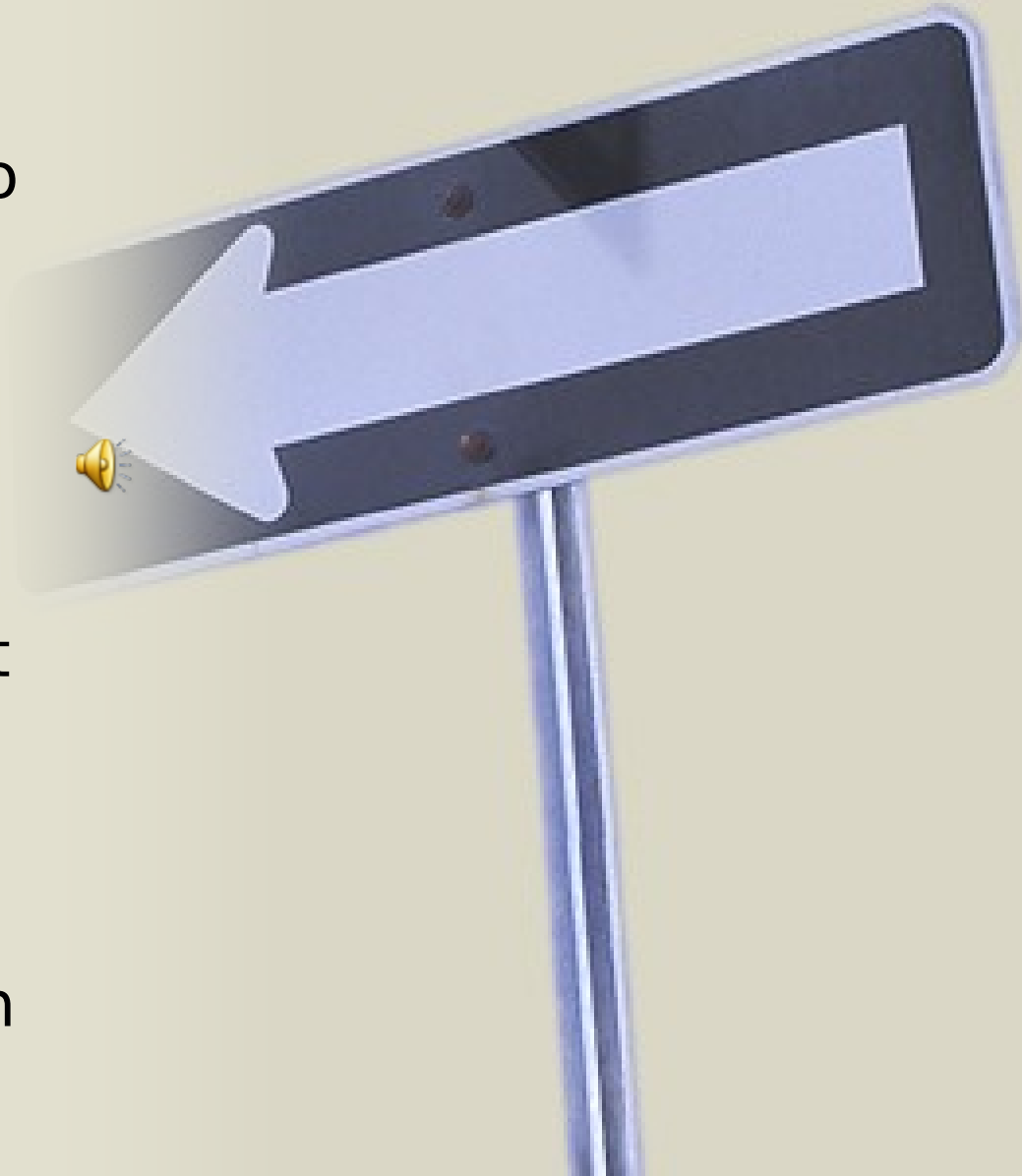
- If bosses sound vague or unsure, don't guess what you think they want
- Instead, pin down bosses by gently pushing them toward a clearer decision or at least presenting a stark choice that they must make



Tip

Skill 11

- Establish a specific time every day or two to communicate with your key boss or bosses
- Stick to the same meeting time so it becomes a habit
- These three- or five-minute status-update chats prevent misunderstandings



It's True

Skill 11

- About 43% of workers say that they do not feel valued by their employers, according to CareerBuilders.com
- If you're one of them, strengthen the relationship by empathizing with bosses and solving their problems

